



Jeffrey Kleinbaum

Jeffrey Kleinbaum is a Rutgers University alum, educator, coach, and author and has devoted much of his life to athletics, education, and preserving the history of **Rutgers basketball**.

Jeff entered **Rutgers in 1972** on a full athletic scholarship to play basketball after being **selected by the New York Mets in the June 1972 MLB Draft**. In choosing Rutgers over a professional baseball career, he became part of the **first group of basketball players in university history to receive athletic scholarships**.

During his four years as a **varsity basketball player**, he helped make Rutgers history, **earning a berth in the NCAA Tournament in 1975** and competing on the legendary **1975–76 team that advanced to the Final Four**—the first appearance in program history. He also played four years of **varsity baseball and served as team captain** during his senior year in 1976.

Following graduation, he began a distinguished career in **education and coaching**. He joined the **inaugural faculty at Spotswood High School in 1976** and became the school's first varsity basketball head coach, earning the honor of **Middlesex County Coach of the Year in 1979**. He later coached varsity basketball and taught **History and Economics at Union High School**.

In 1984, he entered the financial industry, **spending 11 years as a stockbroker and analyst with Kidder, Peabody & Co. and Prudential-Bache**. In 1995, he returned to education, teaching **AP U.S. History and Economics** and coaching boys varsity basketball at **Middletown North High School**.

In 2001, he joined **Whippany Park High School**, where he spent more than two decades as an educator and coach. During his tenure, he **coached boys varsity basketball for 16 years** and was named **Morris County Boys Basketball Coach of the Year** in 2003. With Coach of the Year honors in both Middlesex and Morris counties, he became one of a select group of New Jersey coaches to earn the distinction in two

different counties. He also taught **AP History, Economics, and Law** before retiring in 2023, concluding a career spanning decades of service to students and athletes.

In 2024, he added **author** to his list of accomplishments with the publication of ***Unforgettable Knights: A Player's Account of the Legendary Rutgers Final Four Season***. Written in recognition of the **50th anniversary** of Rutgers' historic 1976 Final Four appearance, the book offers a firsthand account of the team, its players, and a remarkable era that captured the imagination of fans throughout New Jersey.

Motivated in part by the absence of a previous book devoted to this **extraordinary chapter in Rutgers basketball history**, he undertook the project to **preserve the story for future generations**. With the enthusiastic support and encouragement of his former teammates, he brought the **memories and experiences of that unforgettable season** to life from the unique perspective of a player who was there.